



April 26, 2005

Dear Member of Congress:

I am contacting you on behalf of the American Nurses Association (ANA) to urge you to oppose cuts to Medicaid in the FY 2006 Budget Resolution, and to express our support for the establishment of a Bipartisan Medicaid Commission. The proposed Medicaid cuts would eliminate the fundamental guarantee of Medicaid coverage for our nation's most vulnerable citizens. ANA urges you to delay major changes to the Medicaid Program until the debate can be informed by the Bipartisan Medicaid Commission.

Medicaid provides vital health care coverage to more than 50 million of the nation's most vulnerable populations. Medicaid now covers more than 25 million children – including one out of every four children, and one out of every three births – and finances care for 70 percent of nursing home residents. In the last few years, Medicaid has provided a reliable health insurance safety net for low income working families that have lost their health insurance. Two thirds of all Medicaid recipients are members of working families. Medicaid is also the nation's largest payer of nursing home care, and each year, Medicaid helps millions of families with the cost of home based long-term care services.

The proposed Medicaid cuts would swell the ranks of the uninsured and threaten the viability of nursing homes, hospitals, and other needed providers. America's nurses are aware that these changes will contribute to emergency department overcrowding, delayed diagnosis of life-threatening diseases, increased reliance on charity care, and increased expenditures for preventable health complications. Such dramatic changes to this important program deserve further scrutiny and public comment.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

/s/

Rose Gonzalez, MPS, RN  
Director, Government Affairs